

# THE MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY

By Harold MacGrath

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The Million Dollar Mystery will run for twenty-two consecutive weeks in this paper. By an arrangement with the Thanhouser Film Company it has been made possible not only to read the story in this paper but also to see it each week in the various moving picture theatres. For the solution of this mystery story \$10,000 will be given.

### Conditions Governing the Contest

The prize of \$10,000 will be won by the man, woman or child who writes the most acceptable solution of the mystery, from which the last two reels of the motion picture drama will be made and the last two chapters of the story written by Harold MacGrath.

Solutions may be sent to the Thanhouser Film Corporation, either at Chicago or New York, any time up to midnight, Dec. 14. They must bear postage marks not later than that date. This allows four weeks after the first appearance of the last film release and three weeks after the last chapter is published in the paper in which to submit the solutions.

A board of three judges will determine which of the many solutions received is the most acceptable. The judgment of this board will be absolute and final. Nothing of a literary nature will be considered in the decision, nor given any preference in the selection of the winner of the \$10,000 prize. The last two reels, which will give the most acceptable solution to the mystery, will be presented in the theatres having this feature as soon as it is possible to produce the same.

The story corresponding to these motion pictures will appear in the newspapers coincidentally, or as soon after the appearance of the pictures as practicable. With the last two reels will be shown the picture of the winner, his or her home, and other interesting features. It is understood that the newspapers, so far as practicable, in printing the last two chapters of the story by Harold MacGrath, will also show a picture of the successful contestant.

Solutions to the mystery must not be more than 100 words long. Here are some questions to be kept in mind in connection with the mystery as an aid to a solution.

No. 1.—What becomes of the millionaire?

No. 2.—What becomes of the \$1,000,000?

No. 3.—Whom does Florence marry?

No. 4.—What does become of the Russian countess?

Nobody connected either directly or indirectly with "The Million Dollar Mystery" will be considered as a contestant.

### Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Stanley Hargrave, millionaire, after a miraculous escape from the den of the gang of brilliant thieves known as the Black Hundred, lives the life of a recluse for eighteen years. Hargrave one night enters a Broadway restaurant and there comes face to face with the gang's leader, Braine.

After the meeting, during which neither man apparently recognizes the other, Hargrave hurries to his magnificent Rhode Island home and lays plans for making his escape from the country. He writes a letter to the girls' school in New Jersey where 18 years before he had mysteriously left on the doorstep his baby daughter, Florence Gray. He also pays a visit to the hangar of a daredevil aviator.

Braine and members of his band surround Hargrave's home at night, but as they enter the house the watchers outside see a balloon leave the roof. The safe is found empty—the balloon which Hargrave was known to have drawn up was gone. Braine and some one announced the balloon had been punctured and dropped into the sea.

Florence arrives from the girls' school, Princess Olga, Braine's companion, visits her and claims to be a relative. Two bogus detectives call, but their plot is foiled by Norton, a newspaper man.

By bribing the captain of the Orient Norton lays a trap for Braine and his gang. Princess Olga also visits the girls' school and she sends a letter into the reporter's snare. The plan proves abortive through Braine's meddling and only Braine's fall into the hands of the police.

Later, Florence is lured from home by the band, but succeeds in freeing herself from their clutches. The next day Jones removes a box from his hiding place and, nursed by Braine's men, rushes to the water front. A note in motor boats ensues. Jones jumps the boat into the sea and with his assistants sets fire to the pursuing boat.

Florence gives horseback riding and is captured by one of Braine's men. They are pursued, however, and the pair make their complete escape only after Norton has exploded a mine on the fast approaching machine with a bullet.

Countess Olga, scheming to break the engagement now existing between Florence Hargrave and Norton, invites them both to her apartment and sends a letter to the reporter's snare. Florence appears in the hangar just at the planned moment, and result gives Norton back his ring.

Accomplices of Braine succeed in kidnapping Florence while she is sleeping and hurry her off to sea. Norton receives a wireless later informing him that the girl had leaped into the sea and was drowned.

rescued by a ship on which Norton has been shanghaied. (Copyright, 1914; By Harold MacGrath.)

### CHAPTER XI

When Jones received the telegram that Florence was safe, the iron nerve of the man broke down. The suspense had been so keenly terrible that the sudden reaction left him almost hysterically weak. Three weeks of waiting, waiting. Not even the scoundrel and his wife who had been the principal actors in the abduction had been found. From a great ship in mid-ocean they had disappeared. Doubtless they had hidden among the immigrants, who, for a little money, would have fooled all the officers on board. There was no doubt in Jones' mind that the pair had landed safely at Madrid.

As for Susan, she did have hysterics. She went about the room, weeping and laughing and wringing her hands. You would have thought by her actions that Florence had just died. The sight of her stirred the saturnal lips of the butler into a smile. But he did not remonstrate with her in fact, he rather envied her freedom in emotion. Man cannot let go in that fashion; it is a sign of weakness; and he dared not let even Susan see any sign of weakness in him.

So the reporter had found her, and she was safe and sound and on her way to New York? Knowing by this time something of the reporter's courage, he was eager to learn how the event had come about. When he had not heard a telephone message from Norton in forty-eight hours, he had decided that the Black Hundred had finally succeeded in getting hold of him. It had been something of a blow, for while he looked with disfavor upon the reporter's frank regard for his charge, he appreciated the fact that Norton was a staff to lean on, and behind him all the power of the press, which included the privilege of going everywhere even if one could not always get back.

As he folded the telegram and put it into his pocket, he observed the man with the opera glasses over the way. He shrugged. Well, let him watch till his eyes dropped out of his head, he would see only that which was intended for his eyes. Still, it was irksome to feel that no matter when or where you moved, watching eyes observed and chronicled these movements.

Suddenly, not being devoid of a sense of dry humor, Jones stepped over to the telephone and called up her highness the Princess Perigoff.

"Who is it?" He was forced to admit, however reluctantly, that the woman had a marvelously fine speaking voice.

"It is Jones, madam."

"Jones?"

"Mr. Hargrave's butler, madam."

"O! You have news of Florence."

"Yes. It will be an embarrassing day for humanity when some one invents a photographic apparatus by which two persons at the two ends of the telephone may observe the facial expressions of each other."

"What is it? Tell me quickly."

"Florence has been found. She is on her way back to New York. She was found by Mr. Norton, the reporter."

"I am so glad! Shall I come up at once and have you tell me the whole amazing story?"

"Free!" said Florence, as the train began to increase its speed.

Norton reached over and patted her hand. Then he sat back with a sudden shock of dismay. He dived a hand into a pocket, into another and another. The price of the telegram had been sent to Jones was all he had had in the world; and he had borrowed that from a friendly stoker. In the excitement he had forgotten all about such a contingency as the absolute need of money.

"Florence, I'm afraid we're going to have trouble with the conductor when he comes."

"Why?"

"He pulled out his pockets suggestively. 'Not a postage stamp. They'll put us off at the next station. And' with a glance in the little mirror between the two windows, 'I shouldn't blame them a bit.' He was snubbing, he was wearing the suit substitute for his own; and Florence, cartorially, was not much better off."

She smiled, blushed, stood up, and turned her back to him. Then she sat down again. In her hand she held a small dilapidated roll of banknotes.

"I had them with me when they abducted me," she said. "Besides, this ring is worth something."

"Thank the Lord!" he exclaimed, relievedly.

"So there was nothing more to do but be happy; and happy they were. They were quite oblivious to the peculiar interest they aroused among the other passengers. This unshaven young man, in his faded coat and soiled jacket, with his beautiful young girl, in her wrinkled, homely dress, and her golden blonde hair a tangle, and the way they looked at each other during those little conversations peculiar to lovers the world over, impressed the other passengers with the idea that something very unusual had happened to these two."

The Pullman conductor was not especially polite; but money was money, and the stockholders, waiting for their dividends, made it imperative for him to respect it. The regular conductor had more attention than to examine a card charging a \$20 bill.

So, while these two were hurrying on to New York, the stokers were hurrying to meet them. The two trains met and stopped at the same station about eight miles from New York. The princess, accompanied by Vron, who kept well in the back-



"BE SILENT YOU SCUM"



AND HE FELL INTO AN AMBUSH WITHIN A HUNDRED YARDS OF HIS GOAL

whom he hated as a dog with rabies bates water. With Norton free, he would never again dare return to New York openly. This meddling reporter aimed at his ease and elegance.

He left the freighter as soon as a boat could carry him ashore. The fugitives would make directly for the railroad, and thither he went at top speed, to arrive ten minutes too late.

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ground, entered the car occupied by the two captives.

In the mirror at the rear of the car Norton happened to cast an eye at the princess. Vron, however, escaped his eye.

"Be careful, Florence," he said. "The princess is in the car. The game begins again. Pretend that you suspect nothing. Freely quick work on their part. And that's all the more reason why we should play the comedy well. Here she comes. She will recognize you, throw her arms around you, and show all manner of efficiency. Just keep your head and play the game."

"She had about you to me."

"O!" cried the princess. She seized Florence in a wild embrace, she was an amiable actress, and Norton could not help admiring her. "Your butler telephoned me! I ran to the first train out. And here you are, just safe and sound! It is wonderful. Tell me all about it. What an adventure! And, good heavens, Mr. Norton, where did you get these clothes? Did you find her and rescue her? What a newspaper story you'll be able to make out of it all! Now, tell me just what happened. She sat down on the arm of Florence's chair. The girl had steeled her nerves against the touch of her. And yet she was beautiful! How could any one so beautiful be wicked?"

"Well, it began like this," said Florence, and she described her adventures, continuing to be sure, Braine's art in it.

She had reached that part where they had been rescued by Capt. Hancock when a thundering, grinding crash struck the words from her lips. The three of them were flung violently to the side of the car and splintering wood, tinkling glass, and the shriek of steel against steel. A low wall of horror rose, and died away as the car crept over on its side. The three were rendered unconscious and were huddled together on the floor, under the uprooted chairs.

"Vron!" she gasped with only a slight out of the hand from flying glass. He climbed over the chairs and passengers with a single object in view. He saw that all three were interested in Vron. Impossible. He quickly examined them and saw that they had not received serious injuries. He had but little time. The princess, Norton would have to take their chance with the other passengers. Resolutely he stooped and lifted Florence in his arms and crawled out of the car with her. It was a difficult task, but he managed it. Outside, in the confusion, no one paid any attention to him. So he threw the unconscious girl over his shoulder and staggered on toward the road.

It was fortunate that the accident had occurred where it did. Five miles

beyond was the station marked for the arrest of Norton as an abductor and the taking in charge of Florence as a rebellious girl who had run away from her parents. If he could reach the Swede's hut, where his confederates were in waiting, the game was his.

After struggling along for half an hour a carriage was spied by Vron, and he halted it when it reached his side.

"What's the trouble, mister?" asked the farmer.

"A wreck on the railroad. My daughter is badly hurt and I must take her to the nearest village. How far is it?"

"About three miles."

"I'll give you twenty dollars for the use of that rig of yours."

"Can't do it, mister."

"But it's a case of humanity, sir!" indignantly. "You are refusing to aid the unfortunate."

The farmer thought it over for a moment. "All right, you shall have the rig for twenty dollars. When you get to the village take the rig to Doc Sanders' livery. He'll know what to do."

"Thank you. Help me in with her."

Vron drove away without the least intention of going toward the village. As a result, when Florence came to her senses she found herself surrounded by strange and ominous figures. At first she thought that they had taken her from the wreck out of the car, but when she saw the cold, unmerciful face of the man Vron she closed her eyes and weakly she was

glad to find that she was not

in the meantime Norton revived and looked about in vain for Florence. He searched among the crowd of terrified passengers, the hurt and the unharmed, but she was not to be found. He ran back to the princess and helped her out of the broken car.

"Where is Florence?" she asked anxiously.

"God knows. Here, come over and sit down by the fence till I see if there is a field telegraph."

They had already elected one, and his message went off with a batch of others. This time he was determined not to trust to chance. The shock may have brought back Florence's recent mental disorder, and she may have wandered off without knowing what she was doing. On the other hand, she may have been carried off. And against such a contingency he must be fortified. Money! The cause of God was upon it; it was the will of God that she should be found.

By and by the princess was able to walk; and, supporting her, he led her to the road, along which they walked

slowly for at least an hour. They might very well have waited for the relief train. But he could not stand the thought of inactivity. The princess had her choice of staying behind or going with him. He hated the woman but he could not refuse her aid. She had a cut on the side of her head, and she limped besides.

They stopped at the first farm house, explained what had happened, and the mistress urged them to enter. She, she had seen no one, and certainly not a young woman. She must have wandered off in another direction. She ran into the kitchen for a basin and towel, and proceeded to patch the princess' hurts.

She was extremely uneasy. That she should be under obligation to Norton galled her. There was a spark of antagonism left in her soul. She had tried to destroy him, and he had been kind to her. Was he a fool or was he deep, playing a game as shrewd as her own? She could not tell. Where was Vron? Had he carried Florence off?

An hour later a man came in.

"Hullo! More folks from the wreck?"

"Where's the horse and buggy, Jake?" his wife asked.

"Rented it to a man whose daughter was hurt. He went to the village."

"Will you describe the daughter?" asked Norton.

The princess twisted her fingers. The farmer rudely described Florence.

"Have you another horse and a saddle?"

"What's your hurry?"

"I'll tell you later. What I want now is the horse."

"What is to become of me?" asked the princess.

"You will be in good hands," he answered briefly. "I am going to find out what has become of Florence. Is there a deserted farmhouse hereabouts?" he asked of the farmer.

"Not that I recollect."

"Why, yes, there is, Jake. There's that old hut about two miles up the fork," volunteered the wife. "Where the Swede died last winter."

"By Jingo! I'm going into the village and see if that man brought in the rig."

"But get my horse first. My name is James Norton, and I am on the Star in New York. Which way do I go?"

"First turn to the left. Come on; I'll get the horse for you."

Once the horse was saddled, Norton set off at a run. He was unharmed; he forgot all about the fact. His one thought was to find the woman he loved. He was not afraid of meeting a dozen men, nor while his present fury lasted.

And he fell into an ambush within a hundred yards of his goal. They dragged him off the horse and buffeted and misshapened him into the net.

"Both of them," said Vron, rubbing his hands.

"I know you, you Russian rascal," cried Norton. "And if I ever get out of this I'll kill you out of hand! Damn you!"

"O, yes; talk, talk; but it never hurts any one," jeered Vron. "You'll never have the chance to kill me out of hand, as you say. Besides, do you know my face?"

nd see." He turned upon Florence. He is your lover. Do you wish him to die?"

"No, no!"

"We promise to give him his freedom twelve hours from now on condition that you tell where that money is."

"Florence," warned Norton.

"Vron struck him on the mouth. 'Do you see, you scum?'"

"It is in the chest Jones, the butler, threw into the pond," she said bravely.

"And so, my girl, for all the good now."

Vron laughed. "We know about here that it."

Florence, say nothing of my account. They are not the kind of men as keep their word."

"Eh?" started Vron. "We'll see about that." He glanced up his watch. In half an hour the freight comes long. It may become stalled at the creek, but it will serve."

Norton knew very well that if need, aid must they would not hesitate to execute a melodramatic plan of this character. It was the way of the Jew; they had to make crime abnormal in order to enjoy it. They could very well have knocked him on the head then and there and have done with him. For the time used in conveying him to the railroad might prove his salvation. Nearly four hours had passed since the sending of the telegram to Jones.

They bound Florence and left her seated in the chair. As soon as they were gone she rolled to the floor. She was able to right herself, to lock the door, and after a torturous five minutes reached the fireplace. She brightened her hands and wrists, but the blade was the only knife obtainable. She was free.

Jones arrived with half a dozen policemen. Vron alone escaped.

The butler caught Florence in his arms and nearly crushed the breath out of her. And she was so glad to see him that she kissed him half a dozen times. What if he was her father's butler? He was brave and loyal and kind.

"They took him to the track," she cried. "Lock at my wrists!" The butler did so, and kissed them tenderly. And I saved him."

Jones stretched out a hand over Florence's shoulder. "When the time comes," he said; "When the right time comes and my master's enemies ever confounded. But always the roots, ever the hawk, we catch. God bless you, Norton. I don't know what should have done without you."

"When a chap's in love," began Norton, embarrassedly.

"I know, I know," interrupted Jones. "The second relief train is waiting. Let us hurry back. I shouldn't be sure till we are once more in the house."

So, arm in arm, the three of them went down the tracks to the hand car which had brought the police.

And now for the iron bound chest at the bottom of the sea.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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